

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0089

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OCON, VE, US

SUBJECT: GREATER EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN U.S. AND VENEZUELAN
DELEGATIONS TO FORTHCOMING FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM ON
U.S.-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS

REF: CARACAS 0063

1. MINISTER OF PLANNING GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ TELEPHONED THIS AFTERNOON TO SAY HE HAD BEEN IN CONSULTATION WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ AND SEPARATELY WITH FORMER PRESIDENT ROMULO BETANCOURT WHO, AS REPORTED CARACAS 12593 LAST WEEK, HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED ME THAT HE WOULD NOT APPEAR AT THE FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM UNLESS THE U.S. NUMBER ONE REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER.

2. RODRIGUEZ, WHO IS NOT NOTED FOR TACT, SAID THAT MATTERS HAD PROGRESSED TO THE POINT THAT IF ROCKEFELLER DID NOT APPEAR, THERE MIGHT BE NO REPEAT NO VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATION AT THE FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM.

3. I SAID THAT I WAS HESITANT TO IMPOSE FURTHER ON MY FRIENDSHIP WITH VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO MOVE HEAVEN AND EARTH FOR HIM TO MAKE AT LEAST AN ACT DE PRESENCE PERHAPS AT THE FINAL LUNCHEON OF THE SYMPOSIUM; BUT THAT WE HAD IN THE MEANTIME BEEN ENDEAVORING TO SECURE THE PRESENCE OF SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROGERS MORTON WHO, AS HE KNEW,
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IS CHARGED BY THE PRESIDENT WITH OVERALL DIRECTION OF THE

U.S. ENERGY PROGRAM.

4. RODRIGUEZ STILL INSISTED THAT WITHOUT ROCKEFELLER THERE WOULD BE NO SHOW. HE DID NOT, I THINK, INTEND TO BE RUDE BUT HE WAS RUDE AND HIS ATTITUDE DOES NOT ENHANCE PROSPECTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME.

5. IMMEDIATELY AFTER TALKING WITH THE CORDIPLAN MINISTER, I WAS CALLED BY RHODES, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN-VENEZUELAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WHO SAID HE LIKEWISE HAD RECEIVED A CALL FROM RODRIGUEZ WHO TOOK AN IDENTICAL ATTITUDE TO THAT HE HAD SHOWN TO ME. HOWEVER, RHODES IS OF THE DECIDED OPINION THAT IF WE CAN PRODUCE OUR SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AT LEAST FOR SOME APPEARANCE AND HOPEFULLY A SPEECH AT THE FLETCHER SYMPOSIUM, THE VENEZUELAN WILL AGREE TO COME AND WITH MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATION ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY EX-PRESIDENT BETANCOURT WILL NOT BE ON THE DELEGATION.

6. IN VIEW OF THE TIGHTNESS OF TIME AND THE DANGER OF FURTHER EXACERBATING U.S.-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS OVER WHAT IN EFFECT IS MERELY AN EMOTIONAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM ON THE VENEZUELAN SIDE, TO AND PERHAPS A LESS PERCEPTIVE APPROACH ON THE U.S. SIDE, I WARMLY RECOMMEND THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR BE GOOD ENOUGH TO GRACE THIS SYMPOSIUM AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT OF EATING CHICKEN A LA KING AND FROZEN GREEN PEAS. AFTER ALL, WE ALL MAKE SACRIFICES FOR OUR COUNTRY.
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